

Initial Summary of HASC Markup of FY08 National Defense Authorization Act

The House Armed Services Committee marked up the National Defense Authorization Act on 9 May. This is a short summary of provisions affecting the National Guard.

Changing Authority of the National Guard:

This draft of the bill would upgrade the position of Chief, NGB to General and make it a Senior Advisor to the Chairman, JCS, particularly on support to civil authorities during emergencies at home. The NGB would be designated a joint activity of the DoD rather than of the Departments of the Air Force and Army. The NGB charter would be expanded, reflecting current practice of coordination with federal agencies, states, Joint Forces Command and Northern Command. The CNGB would not be given a seat on the JCS. An amendment to count service as TAG to be significant joint duty experience for purposes of promotion was not included during the mark up but may be offered during floor consideration.

Section 1621(b) directs the Secretary of Defense to establish procedures allowing U.S. Northern Command to exercise command of National Guard forces which are not federalized but are under state control performing "full-time National Guard duty" under Title 32. The language refers to "mixed status forces" which are defined as National Guard units in title 32 status which are training or operating alongside active duty units.

The bill incorporates the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve's recommendation to create a Council of Governors to advise the President on Guard matters. The bill would also repeal changes passed last year to the Insurrection Act.

Equipping Matters:

The HASC bill authorizes \$1B for the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation. It also requires the DoD to evaluate and report on NG preparedness on a state - by - state basis for homeland missions, not just war time contingencies as is currently the case. The DoD and the NGB are both required to report on the possibility of adding one or more Guard stryker units.

Personnel Benefits:

The administration of the Montgomery GI bill for the RC is moved from DoD to VA. The bill authorizes reintegration programs for the Reserve Components based on the National Guard pilot program in MN. There appear to be no provisions regarding earlier RC retirement.

Other Provisions:

The bill requires that DoD be reimbursed by supported federal agencies when the NG provides support to federal law enforcement or for National Special Security Events. Army Guard authorized end strength is increased by 1,300. The HASC also increased from 2 percent to 3 percent the amount by which Reserve Components may exceed their legal endstrength. Given strong recruiting, this would give the Army National Guard needed room to grow. The number of National Guard and Reserve ROTC scholarships would be slightly increased to 424.

The NDAA will be considered on the House floor the week of May 14. A Senate version of the NDAA will be produced the week of May 21.